



Washington Association of Wheat Growers

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WAWG opposes breaching Snake River dams

As scoping meetings on the federal Columbia River Power System continue throughout the region, The Washington Association of Wheat growers reiterates its opposition to any consideration of breaching the Snake River dams.

The Snake River dams are part of the Columbia-Snake River System, a 465-mile river waterway that is the top wheat export gateway in the United States and the third largest grain export gateway in the world. More than half of the wheat barged on the river system moves through one or more of the dams. To move the same amount of wheat by road or rail would require 137,000 semi-trucks or 23,900 railcars, leading to increased fuel consumption, increased emissions and increased wear and tear on our transportation infrastructure.

Besides grain, nearly \$3 billion worth of commercial cargo is moved across the river system, giving markets as far away as the Midwest access to international markets. Barging is one of the lowest cost, most environmentally friendly modes of transportation we have. A typical four-barge tow moves the same amount of cargo as 140 rail cars or 538 trucks using just a fraction of the fuel.

Besides their worth as part of our region's transportation system, the dams also produce enough clean hydropower energy to power nearly 2 million homes. The dams work in concert with other renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, to balance the grid when those renewables are not producing. If the dams are removed, it would take two nuclear, three coal-fired or six gas-fired power plants to replace the average annual power they produce, leading to the increased production of greenhouse gases.

“The Snake River dams are a vital part of the Washington wheat industry in terms of transportation and access to export terminals on the West Coast,” said Ben Adams, president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and a grower from Coulee City, Wash. “The dams also help keep farmers’ costs down by providing an alternative mode of transportation to the rails and roads, and in times like these, with historically low wheat prices, we need all the savings we can get.”

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About WAWG: Education and outreach are the heart of Washington Association of Wheat Growers activity, all of which is aimed at helping Washington wheat families. Since 1954, WAWG has been dedicated to the enrichment of the Washington wheat industry as a nonprofit trade association, which depends on volunteers, membership dues and donations to carry out activities as representatives on the state and national levels. WAWG monitors state, transportation, research and natural resources policy and partners with the National Association of Wheat Growers to monitor national farm policy. Visit wawg.org for more information.